



Indian Health Service Press Release

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IHS Acting Director Charles W. Grim Decides Not to Seek a Second Term

Dr. Charles W. Grim has decided not to seek a second term as the director of the Indian Health Service (IHS), an agency in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

“Throughout my 24-year IHS career I have been honored to work toward elevating the health status of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest possible level,” said Dr. Grim. “On a recent visit home to Oklahoma, it was clear to me that the needs of my family dictate that I can no longer continue to work so far from them. Continuing the 1,500-mile commute home to Oklahoma from Washington just isn’t feasible any longer.”

Dr. Grim, D.D.S., M.H.S.A., is a member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, an assistant surgeon general, and a rear admiral in the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service. Dr. Grim served as the seventh director of the IHS from the date of his confirmation by the full Senate on July 16, 2003, until his four-year term ended on July 16, 2007. He has served as Acting Director since that date. He also served as interim director from August 2002 until his confirmation in 2003.

“I commend Dr. Grim for his dedication and commitment as IHS Director for the last four years,” said HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt. “Throughout his tenure he has demonstrated his compassion and strong leadership on behalf of the people who receive their health care through the IHS.”

As IHS Director, Dr. Grim has managed a \$4 billion nationwide health care delivery program composed of 12 administrative Area (regional) Offices, which oversee local hospitals and clinics, and a workforce of approximately 15,000 employees. The IHS is responsible for providing preventive, curative, and community health care services to approximately 1.9 million of the nation’s 3.3 million American Indians and Alaska Natives through a nationwide network of 48 hospitals, 283 health centers, 162 Alaska village clinics, and 154 health stations. The IHS is the principal federal health care provider and health advocate for American Indian and Alaska Native people.

Among his accomplishments as IHS Director is Dr. Grim’s strong focus on preventive health care throughout the Indian health care system. During his first term as IHS Director, he started initiatives in behavioral health, health promotion/disease prevention, and chronic care management.

“Dr. Grim strengthened the focus of preventative health care within IHS. The American Indian and Alaska Native people have benefited greatly from his service and promotion of health care and disease prevention and treatment programs,” said Secretary Leavitt.

Dr. Grim also has worked intently for passage of the pending reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act; ensuring a steady budget for Indian health care during a time of fiscal constraint; and formalizing beneficial health care improvement partnerships between the IHS and entities such as the Mayo Clinic, Harvard University, and Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Grim also has established partnerships with the Veterans Health Administration and Health Canada as well as working relationships on indigenous health issues with Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, and the Pan American Health Organization.

Dr. Grim has been a strong proponent for tribal consultation and for the tribal self-determination choices of receiving health care directly from the IHS or contracting for some or all health programs.

Dr. Grim graduated from the University of Oklahoma College of Dentistry in 1983 and began his career with the IHS in 1983 at the Indian Health Center in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. In addition to his dentistry degree, Dr. Grim also has a master’s degree in health services administration from the University of Michigan.



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